

1900s Alabama Railroad Town

In the early 1900s, railroads brought new industries to Alabama. The town below, based on the town in the Alabama Voices Gallery, is an example of an early railroad town.

Use the information on the back of this page to complete the town map.



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The information below will help you complete the map on the other side of this activity sheet. The buildings described are important in early railroad towns. Notice that the railroad tracks divide the town; African Americans and poor white families lived on the “other side of the tracks.” This is the period when segregation became a part of people’s lives.

1. The two schools in this town are located next to American flags. Label **SCHOOL**.
2. The three churches in this town are on Church St., Cemetery St., and Chestnut St. Label **CHURCH**.
3. Draw cemeteries next to the churches. Label **CEMETERY**.
4. Draw a baseball field across from the largest school. Label **BASEBALL FIELD**.
5. On Commerce Street, people do shopping. Some businesses are labeled, but add: **GROCER** (where you can buy food) and **GENERAL STORE** (where you can buy essential household goods).
6. Label the **RAILROAD STATION**, located next to the railroad tracks, across from the Telegraph Office.
7. Label the **MILLWORKS** and **COAL AND OIL WAREHOUSE**. They are located near the Mill Office.
8. The Court House is the largest building in this town. Label **COURT HOUSE**.
9. Even in the 1900s, cotton continued to be a leading industry in Alabama. Label **COTTON GIN**, which is located near the Cotton Warehouse.
10. Locate the Telegraph Office and the Telegraph Pole. Draw a **TELEGRAPH LINE**, connecting them along the railroad tracks.

Questions to consider! Learn more about the 1900s Alabama Railroad Town.

1. Why are the school and the church on one side of the railroad tracks so much smaller than the others? (Hint: Re-read the description at the top of this page.)
2. What stores (besides those listed above) would you expect to see on Commerce Street (and nearby on Adams Street)? There are seven other buildings you can label. Think about the other types of things you would need to buy, or people you might need to visit. (Hint: Where do you buy shoes? Clothes? Who do you go see if you are sick?)
3. Take a look at the **KEY** on the front of this page, near the map. Why are some homes two-story houses, why are others one-story homes? (Hint: Think about the side of the railroad these homes are located.)